

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF S.B. No. 16 – Session Year 2022

My name is Kenneth Jones and I am a resident of Burlington. I submit this testimony in strong opposition to the Governor's bill, marked S.B. No. 16 which seeks to modify and enact certain gun laws and restrictions upon the citizens of the state of Connecticut. As we recover from a rather long pandemic with a legislature that has been largely inactive, it's interesting that this is one of the first topics to take up. This bill purports to address "gun violence" and "juvenile crime" but the text of the bill does nothing but to further confuse Connecticut's existing anti-gun measures and further punishes the law-abiding majority of this state who own firearms for self-defense, collection, hunting, and sporting purposes. It does nothing to address gun violence or juvenile crime issues. Again, it's a continued attack on the legal gun owners of this state.

Connecticut implemented excessively restrictive gun restrictions as a knee-jerk reaction to Sandy Hook. A large portion of the measures put into place at that time were mere photocopies of the Clinton era Assault Weapon Ban, which as we all know, was allowed to sunset after 10 years because it had done nothing to reduce any type of crime or the types of weapons used in crimes during the time it was in effect. The legislators and governor of this state (past and present) have been hell-bent on removing certain types of weapons from the hands of legal gun owners and continuing to make a patchwork of gun laws in this state that citizens, dealers, and a large percentage of the fine folks at DESPP cannot quite decipher.

As a result of the Sandy Hook ban, there has been confusion and conflicting information from every level; that is, conflicting opinions of firearm configuration from SFLU, dealers, manufacturers, and the public. The state now seeks to reduce the "feature count" on what it deems is an "assault weapon", restrict the transfer of what have become known as "pre-ban" weapons, restrict and classify legally purchased or built "other" firearms as "assault weapons", and impose additional restrictions and requirements on Federal Firearms License holders.

The state lacks any data or evidence to show that weapons used in crimes in this state are both a) committed using the types of weapons once again under attack and b) permit holders commit crimes using firearms. Connecticut has a rather difficult process in place to obtain a Permit to Carry Pistols and Revolvers. Folks who follow this process and obtain a permit are the ones who legally purchase firearms and do not commit crimes with them. The focus, as always, should be on criminals who steal firearms and use them to commit crimes. It goes without saying that no amount of gun legislation will do anything to prevent that, especially when this state has a track record of not enforcing or punishing criminals who commit crimes with firearms.

The frustration from the shooting sports community in this state is tremendous. We are the ones who have to suffer from more draconian gun restrictions and have to always be certain to cross our t's and dot our i's for fear of being out of compliance with some such law. Criminals, not so much. Why are we constantly under attack? Being a gun owner, collector, or enthusiast is not a crime. Yet, we are treated that way in what was once the home of firearms in America - Connecticut. Legal gun owners who purchase firearms deal with plenty of time-consuming processes and paperwork in this state to obtain permits and buy firearms. And buying a firearm is at the mercy of having DESPP authorizations answer the phone – with no fault of their own – they are clearly understaffed and overworked.

What will reducing the feature count on semi-automatic rifles do? What will banning “other” firearms from being sold and requiring them to be registered do? What will banning the further sale and transfer of “pre ban” firearms that the state feels are “assault weapons” do? The answer is the same: nothing. Criminals will steal a handgun and commit a crime with it, and nothing here will change that fact. Perhaps if the state enforced existing laws against those criminals, you’d see a reduction in our already very low crime rates.

Respectfully submitted,
Kenneth Jones
Burlington